

HISTORIES OF **INDIVIDUAL PARKS**

City of Santa Barbara
California

By Mary Louise Days
City Planning Division, Community Development Department
1977

Note

City of Santa Barbara Parks and Recreation Department staff reformatted this document in 2015, but did not update or significantly edit the content of the document itself.

FOREWORD

The individual park histories, which follow, were prepared for the City's Park and Recreation Master Plan. The research was carried out over the winter of 1975-1976, and the writing completed in March 1976. Following publication of the Master Plan draft, the material was updated. Sources and references are listed at the end of this section.

Use restrictions for individual parks were included, as they became available during research. Physical descriptions of the facilities and dedication information are contained in the Master Plan report.

The park histories are not intended to list each and every major improvement carried out at each park, but to give highlights.

Brief histories of the Park and Recreation Commissions and departments are also included.

Mary Louise Days

City Planning Division

Community Development Department

City of Santa Barbara

June 1977

Bruce Thompson

Planning Director

PARK COMMISSION/DEPARTMENT

The 1853 Haley and Wackenreuder map, which was the official map of the City prepared following its incorporation in 1850, indicated several public plazas. It showed “Garden de Alameda” containing six blocks between Arrellaga and Victoria Streets at its present two-block width; Plaza De la Guerra; Plaza de Vera Cruz crossing Cota Street; Plaza del Estero – Two blocks at Salsipuedes Street between Mason and Yanonali, Canal (Olive) and Quarantina; Plaza de la Playa Streets; a “reserve” between Ortega and De la Guerra, Quarantina and Salsipuedes Streets; Plaza de Granada – two blocks between Islay and Arrellaga, Castillo and Baños (Bath) Streets; Plaza de la Mesa – two blocks between De la Guerra and Cota, Castillo and Rancheria Streets.

It has been reported that Plaza de la Playa’s status as a public land was revoked in 1856 because of non-use. Four of the Alameda Plaza blocks were lost the same way and with “squatters’ rights” in 1868. Plaza de la Mesa was revoked in 1868. Plaza de Colon, two blocks between Victoria, Figueroa, Bath and De la Vina Streets was revoked in 1867.

The parks shown on the 1903 City map were Alameda Plaza (two blocks), Plaza Vera Cruz and Plaza del Mar. Oak Park was acquired in 1904.

A three-member Park Commission was created by City Ordinance Number 401 in March 1902. Mayor George S. Edwards appointed the members immediately and the first recorded meeting was held March 10, 1902. E. A. Gilbert was president, Dr. A. B. Doremus, superintendent, and C. H. Frink, secretary. Dr. Doremus served as superintendent for 17 years as a volunteer citizen, without salary. In 1912 he took a trip abroad and brought back rare plant specimens and seeds. The results may be seen in Plaza del Mar and Alameda Parks. Dr. Doremus was a Louisiana-born dentist who had lived in Europe. He came here for his health and bought Parra Grande estate in Montecito in 1882. He directed street tree planting and landscaped Plaza del Mar, requesting the removal of the streetcar track from the plaza. The first improvement of East Cabrillo Boulevard took place during his tenure. Dr. Doremus landscaped many other grounds locally, doing some of the planting personally. He died in 1937 at age 95.

Superintendent-Commissioner Doremus retired in 1919 and Ralph T. Stevens was appointed as the City’s first salaried Park Superintendent. Stevens was a horticulturist and landscape architect of great ability and repute. He was born at Lotusland, the famed Montecito estate, when his father owned it. Stevens Park, the former San Roque Cañon Park, is named for him. He designed many of the City’s public parks and gardens and also served as a park commissioner and consultant.

The next park superintendent, also a noted horticulturist, was E. O. Orpet. He imported and propagated specimen plants and installed the palm trees in the median strip of Upper State Street. The Orpet Parks (Hillside Parks) on Alameda Padre Serra at Moreno Road are named for him. He improved these parks, planting rare specimens in them.

The longest tenure in the job to date belongs to Finlay A. MacKenzie, the genial Scottish-American who built up the Park Department staff, provided publications about its programs, and encouraged its participation in community activities such as Old Spanish Days and the National Horse Show. MacKenzie Park at State Street and Las Positas Road is named for him. He had been head gardener at Hotel del Coronado in Coronado, then at the Hall estate here before going to work for the City.

Park Department staff personnel has increased from one gardener in 1903 (City population 6,587) to 18 in 1927, 32 in 1929 (population 32,000) and 55 persons in 1940 (population 34,438), then decreased to 47 in 1975 (population 72,000). In 1944-45 there were 26 parks in the City Park system. In 1975 there were 47 parks and park properties. A complete list of superintendents follows this chapter.

Park Commission membership has remained at five commissioners since 1912. The first woman member listed was Edna L. White (1923).

Over the years the Parks staff has performed other work contributing to the life of the community, such as the National Flower Show, during Old Spanish Days and Semana Nautica, maintenance of certain equipment, and providing holiday decorations for City buildings. For several years Park Department crews built the City of Santa Barbara's float entry in the Pasadena Tournament of Roses parade. The first recorded entry was in 1915. The period 1933-40 featured an annual entry with three sweepstakes and four first prizes won. Fred Jackson, a park commissioner, was a member of the post-earthquake Board of Public Safety and Reconstruction.

During the Great Depression, the Park Commission provided work for the unemployed under the direction of the Emergency Unemployment Fund Committee. The projects chosen were those of the greatest public benefit and which required the most hand labor. The relief fund paid salaries and the City supplied tools, equipment and supervision. Projects included: care and planting of street trees; planting of trees in parks and at the Bird Refuge; installation of iceplant cuttings along Alameda Padre Serra, Cliff and Loma Alta Drives; establishment of a reserve community woodpile in Oak Park; work at Sheffield Reservoir; beach improvement work in the Palm Park area and removal of paving material left from the old boulevard.

World War II saw many of the Park Department employees joining the armed forces. Reduced City revenues also cut the budgets. In the departmental report dated early 1945, Park Commission chairman Maunsell Van Rensselaer asked "Are we showing foresight, and is it fair to our boys overseas, to permit our most prized asset, the physical beauty of our city, to continue to deteriorate?" The report suggested list of post-war improvements for each of the established parks.

During the war servicemen's ball teams used Cabrillo and Laguna Ball Parks for games. Cabrillo Park and Dwight Murphy Field were also used for housing divisions from Camp Cooke (now Vandenberg Air Force Base) during training and recreation visits. The Army leased Dwight Murphy Field for a recreation area and as headquarters for the Army Redistribution Center. De la Guerra Plaza was used for War Bond rallies and for exhibits of armored vehicles by the War Bond Committee.

The Park Department took part in many municipal war activities, such as hanging posters and banners for bond drives and supplying trucks for orchestras at rallies. The employees were organized as a demolition crew in the Civilian Defense Organization. Decorative foliage was supplied for civic war effort events, the U. S. O., Hoff Hospital, Camp Cooke, etc. Plants were supplied to the marine Air Station and to Camp Cooke. In 1943 several regiments from the camp received aquatic instruction from Park Department lifeguards at the beaches and in Los Baños del Mar pool. The department also provided advice to citizens in the growing of victory gardens.

The department office was located in a small building at 706 Garden Street until 1972 when the block became part of Presidio Springs Redevelopment Project. That building was demolished, as was Laguna ballpark. The department moved into a new metal building at the corner of Ortega and Laguna Streets, on a portion of the ball park site.

With the City's realization that parks and recreation activities are interrelated, the combined position of Director of Parks and Recreation was established in January 1973. In May of that year City Council determined that the Park and

Recreation Commission should remain separate entities. David J. Conway was appointed Park Superintendent on May 8, 1973. A “super department” called the Community Services Department was formed at the beginning of 1974 and Douglas Willsie was named Director. The Park Division and Recreation Divisions are within this department, as are Airport, Property Management, Harbor and Library.

Examples of Park Department budget allocations are \$68,675 for 1941-42, \$50,168 for 1944-45, and \$871,648 for 1975-76.

In June 1977 the City decided to abolish the super department and reestablished the separate departments.

RECREATION COMMISSION/DEPARTMENT

On June 13, 1929, City Council adopted ordinance 1449, which established the Board of Recreation Commissioners. It called for five members to include one Park Commissioner, the City School Superintendent and three public members. The ordinance provided for employment of a Director of Recreation and eleven supervisors of recreation, and was enacted as an urgency matter for public safety and health. It was the result of recommendations contained in a report submitted by the Recreational Playgrounds Report Committee given to City Council on June 6, 1929. The main recommendation called for cooperation in use of the facilities at public schools with the City's parks and beaches. Existing baseball and tennis facilities were listed. Hiring of a director, part-time secretary, and eleven supervisors was recommended, as well as the appointment of the commission.

The two Directors of Recreation who served from 1929-1941 were also employed as chairmen of the Physical Education Department at Santa Barbara High School. A list of Directors of Recreation (superintendents) follows at the end of this chapter.

The Young People's Club Association, a recreation organization for boys, was established in 1903 and expanded to include girls in 1907. Miss Sophie Baylor, Miss Ellen Chamberlain, Charles A. Edwards and James D. Lowsley were its original directors. Recreation activities took place in its facilities on East Haley Street and then on East Ortega Street. The Y.P.C.A. supervised local playgrounds, including one at Vera Cruz Plaza. It should be noted that this early organization was privately directed and was not City-supported.

The association's name was changed to Neighborhood House Association on November 9, 1908, and its activities were extended to include assistance for the needy. Outdoor dances were held at the northeast corner of Santa Barbara and De la Guerra Streets, near the present Neighborhood House. In 1910 the board of directors, of which Miss Pearl Chase was a member, hired Miss Margaret Baylor to the position of Superintendent of Neighborhood House. She was the younger sister of Sophie Baylor and had been a professional settlement worker in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Recreation Center (Santa Barbara Community clubhouse) was built in 1913-14 at a cost of \$40,000 and at the instigation of Margaret Baylor. The Communication Recreation Center Association was incorporated in 1914 upon completion of the Center. Miss Baylor firmly believed in the importance of organizing and directing leisure. One of the main purposes for constructing the Center was to provide a wholesome location for public youth dances. It served this purpose for decades and the auditorium at 100 East Carrillo Street still hosts dance classes and public dances. The Center was also used by children and by older people, for war relief work and for community meetings.

Margaret Baylor served as Center director until her death in 1924. Other contributors to its success were Miss Chase, Miss Grace Southwick, Miss Marjorie Hold, Miss Ellen Chamberlain, Mrs. Charles S. Raymond, Miss Bertha Rice, Mrs. Lora Knight, Mrs. William Norman Campbell, and later Mrs. Louise Lowry Davis. Miss Chamberlain contributed funds to build the auditorium, Mrs. Raymond funds for the gymnasium, and the public subscription provided the remainder. Only the gymnasium suffered real damage in the 1925 earthquake, and it was rebuilt on a larger scale with the help of the Santa Barbara Relief Fund Committee. Miss Julia Morgan of San Francisco was the architect.

Miss Bertha G. Rice directed the Center following Miss Baylor's death. Donations supported the Center until 1942. A Purchase Committee was formed to raise funds to purchase the Center from the mortgage holder. This was done over a two-year period, 1944-46, and improvements were made to the buildings under the committee's direction. Sterling S.

Winans and C. C. Christiansen served as recreation directors during this period. Patrick J. Maher was mayor of the City and lent strong support to the project. The City became owner in early 1946.

Margaret Baylor originally called the building “Recreation Center for Youth and Women’s Hotel”. Upstairs rooms were rented to single women until the Margaret Baylor Inn was opened next door in 1928. Other types of assistance were given women at the Center, such as employment and housing counseling, childcare instruction, travel and social aid.

For many years the Community Christmas celebrations have been held at Recreation Center, a custom begun in 1920 by Mrs. Albert Herter and Pearl Chase of the Plans and Planning Committee of the Community Arts Association. Many of the City’s recreation activities originated with the Recreation Center, such as playground supervision and the Children’s Fiesta Parade. New activities were always being planned at the Center.

In the late 1920s increased leisure time and improved communications led to greater public interest in City-supported recreation activities. This, as well as growth of public school physical education courses, resulted in the appointment of the Recreation Commission and staff.

Playground equipment and tennis courts had been installed at some public parks prior to the establishment of the Recreation Commission. In March 1905, Vera Cruz Park was graded and fenced for a children’s playground, with teeter-totters and swings, as an early example. However, a May 1929 petition to City Council signed by representatives of local organizations pointed out the need for a municipal recreation program to fully use the facilities. The first commission meeting was held June 15, 1929

Some of the early responsibilities of the Recreation Department were the Plaza del Mar and Oak Park tennis courts, illumination for night ball games at Pershing Park, and supervision of the ball leagues. Among these activities, an outstanding one was organization and direction by Louise Lowry of the Women’s Sports and Softball League from 1936 until World War II.

In March 1933, the Board of Education granted permission for the Recreation Department to occupy three buildings at the old Santa Barbara Junior High School site at De la Vina and Victoria Streets. These were its first actual departmental offices and recreational facilities. The old gymnasium was used until its demolition in 1954. The former shop building was remodeled and called the Community Center. In the late 1960s it was refurbished again with money donated by retired recreation supervisor Louise Lowry Davis, and named for her.

The grounds of the Community Center were developed for several activities with Depression relief funds. The area is now called Spencer Adams Park and is heavily used by adult lawn bowlers.

In 1933 the Recreation Department sponsored Fleet Week as a July Fourth observance. It is believed that Semana Nautica evolved from this community celebration. The Semana Nautica Association has sponsored this event since its incorporation in 1937, with cooperation from the City and other local organizations.

In late 1933 the Recreation and Park Boards agreed that all City recreation activities would be supervised by the Recreation Commission.

The Recreation Planning Council was appointed by the City in 1934 to study recreation needs. The existence of a number of unemployed persons contributed to the need in this Depression economy. The Community Center improvements followed, as did the establishment of Laguna Ball Park in 1938, West Beach improvements, and construction of the Municipal Tennis Courts. The latter, with the clubhouse and grandstand, were dedicated May 1938. Los Baños del Mar public swimming pool was constructed at the end of the decade, opening in 1939.

A federation of school, law enforcement, social welfare and recreational organizations was formed in the mid-thirties to coordinate youth recreational activities. In 1938 it became part of the County Council of Social Agencies. During this period relief funds were used to employ part-time recreation instructions and supervisors, including college students.

Santa Barbara has been fortunate in the devotion, determination and caliber of its recreation directors. The department's programs have been well publicized for their size and comprehensiveness. The Recreation Department (later Division) has regularly published pamphlets listing its activities. Over the years several conferences on recreation and physical education have been hosted in Santa Barbara by the department.

The School Board took over the Community Center building in late 1938 and a replacement site was provided by the Board at Carrillo and De la Vina Streets. It opened December 10, 1938 with an emphasis on adult activities. This building was converted to use by the draft board during World War II.

The Cabrillo (David Gray) Pavilion was remodeled in part to accommodate youth and community activities, opening in April 1941. This Cabrillo Community Center was financed by the Recreation Department and by user fees. During the war the pavilion and nearby parks were used by the military for rest and recreation. The Recreation Commission was happy to help the war effort by providing activities for the servicemen. Space at the Recreation Center was used by the War Assets Administration.

Rooms in the main Recreation Center were used for the local youth after the war and during the 1950s, then the Cabrillo Youth Center was again established in the early 1960s. The Youth Council supported itself for a period of time.

The department budget has increased from \$6,000 in 1929-30 to \$14,000 in 1937-38, \$65,000 in 1955-56, \$206,000 in 1965-66 and \$560,000 in 1975-76.

The combined position of Director of Parks and Recreation was established in January, 1973, with Douglas H. Willsie appointed to fill this new position on March 13, 1973. In May of that year City Council determined that the Park and Recreation Commissions should remain separate entities. Richard Johns was appointed Recreation Superintendent on May 14, 1973. A "super department" called the Community Services Department was formed at the beginning of 1974 and Mr. Willsie was named Director. The Park Division and Recreation Division were within this department, as were Airport, Property Management, Harbor and Library.

In June 1977 the City decided to abolish the super department and reestablish the separate departments.

CABRILLO BOULEVARD, PALM PARK

Santa Barbara's Cabrillo Boulevard is one of the world's famed scenic oceanfront avenues. West Cabrillo Boulevard, from State Street to Castillo Street, had been constructed in 1891-1892 following passage of a \$70,000 bond election. Architect Peter J. Barber, mayor at the time, is said to have planned the palm tree-lined boulevard after seeing similar boulevards in Europe. The ordinance and bond issue also included provision for an easterly boulevard, 40 feet wide, extending to the Milpas Street area. In 1892 a committee was appointed to determine varieties of trees, plants and shrubs "anent the Boulevard along the Plaza del Mar and the garden".

In 1903 the park Commission recommended that the City purchase the lumberyard which was located adjacent to the east of Stearns Wharf. Ordinance Number 450 adopted October 9, 1903, dedicated to public use as a public park the lands lying between the southerly line of the eastern extension of Ocean Boulevard and the mean high water mark of the Pacific Ocean, and authorized condemnation of the land. Ordinance 451 dated the next day dedicated City-owned land in the area to public use as a public park. The previous June the Ocean Boulevard and its eastern extension had been placed under the direct charge and supervision of the Park Commission. "East Beach Park" was acquired in 1904.

"Ocean" Boulevard later became "West Boulevard" and the two portions of the present Cabrillo Boulevard were known as the East Boulevard and the West Boulevard. In December 1919 City Council officially named the street "Cabrillo Boulevard", but the East and West Boulevard designations continued for some years.

The East Boulevard was completed in 1905. Six weeks later high tides and rain washed it away and repair was needed. In 1907 \$50,000 in bonds was approved to repair the eastern boulevard.

Charles Mulford Robinson wrote a report to the Mayor and City Council in 1909 in which he recommended many civic improvements, including landscaped street intersections. For the Ocean Boulevard he recommended taking out the angles and putting in curves, and the installation of simple, dignified and not garish streetlights. He commented on the boulevard's use then as the coast highway, and called for it to become a park drive and park-link.

A portion of what is now Palm Park and Cabrillo Boulevard was used at that time for palm-thatched winter cottages. Robinson said, "Beyond the great curve, the boulevard is suddenly bereft of attractiveness. The ocean is out of sight, a salt marsh, a railroad spur, a lumber yard, and pier taking its place, and on the railroad side there are ugly commercial buildings, neglected vacant lots, shrieking billboards. To the center of this jumble broad State Street comes down..." He also mentioned the Mission Creek overflow problem.

Robinson recommended the establishment of a pleasant view park between the railroad station and the beach, from Chapala Street to Gray Avenue. He suggested that the City take over the great salt marsh (Bird Refuge), purchased by a group of 60 public-spirited citizens in 1906 and deeded to the City in 1909 for \$7,367. He felt that the area could be used as a park and inner yacht harbor. The 1909 deed restriction was for "Purpose of public report" and included the present Municipal Tennis Court area. In 1910 the City created a fund called the "Lake Park Improvement Fund" for the area. In February 1925 a \$195,000 bond issue was approved for construction and completion of the Salt Pond property, but it was used only for purchase of Cabrillo Park and a small piece of boulevard property. Mrs. William A. Clark donated \$50,000 to the city in 1928 for dredging and improvement of a pond area, and the new park was named for her deceased daughter, Andree Clark.

The original wall between the boulevard and the ocean was constructed in 1907, then a wooden wall was rebuilt in 1915 after a storm damaged the highway. In 1930 the old wall was washed out and a new \$100,000 revetment was constructed.

By 1924 the populace feared that private developers would construct shops and amusements on the beachfront west of Por la Mar Drive, so on March 4, 1924, the "East Boulevard Improvement Association" was organized. Frederick Forrest Peabody was the chairman of the group, whose aim was to secure for City Park purposes all the beachfront land from State Street to the Salt Pond. "East Beach Park" to the east of Por la Mar Drive had been obtained for park purposes and road widening in 1904.

So in the late 1920s this East Boulevard area was acquired for the City. The Association agreed to hold accumulated properties until January 1, 1927. The previously mentioned \$195,000 bond issue was approved by the voters in February 1925. In November the City bought some lands north of the boulevard following the bond sale.

The City prepared plans to shift the street 300 to 600 feet to the north between Anacapa and Milpas Streets, repaving it from 60 to 80 feet wide, and to develop a park between the new right of way and the beach. Another bond issue was approved in 1927.

The association terminated early in 1926 and the "Gray Trust for East Boulevard" was formed. It purchased houses in "Shore acres" and beach lots to the east. In 1925 David Gray had offered a \$100,000 bathhouse (pavilion) to the City on condition that it would furnish the building. The City failed to do this and the building was closed until the Gray family also provided the furnishings. The facility was given to the City in 1927. It had been built in 1926 on a site easterly of the end of Milpas Street. The originally proposed site below the end of the street was rejected because of the high water line.

In the process of obtaining the land for boulevard and park purposes enough area was left northerly of the street right of way to provide for a "park strip" buffer which could be planted to screen the adjacent railroad and industrial uses. A 1928 ordinance declared Cabrillo Boulevard a pleasure drive way and park boulevard.

The lumber yard site adjacent to the wharf was not purchased by the City until authorized by a January 1931 bond issue. The property had suffered fire and storm damage in the previous four years. The purchase price was \$200,000 for two city blocks. The park Commission's 1903 recommendation was finally a reality.

In the decades since these fortunate events took place the citizens have zealously guarded their beachfront. In 1948 a proposal to lease property on the beach side of Cabrillo Boulevard at State Street for a drive-in restaurant was defeated. Later proposals to drill for oil in the area, to pave beach at the eastern city limits for parking, and to break through the park strip for access earned public outcry. The improvement of Palm Park and the East Beach Park has continued up to recent times.

ALAMEDA PLAZA

Size

9.33 acres, City Blocks 73 and 74

Location

Anacapa, Micheltorena, Garden and Sola Streets

Date Acquired

Shown on 1853 map along with 4 adjacent blocks later set aside by ordinance

Restrictions or Provision

Six blocks named "Plaza Alameda" by 1855 ordinance 3.5 for plaza and public use

History

Ordinance No. 47, January 20, 1876 stated that an ordinance on April 29, 1853 set aside Blocks 88 and 89 (the 2 down to Victoria Street) as part of the Plaza Alameda, and on August 5, 1855 and August 9, 1856; that on March 15, 1868 Blocks 73 and 74 should compose the Plaza Alameda. Block 88 was sold to Antonio Arrellanes in April 1868; Block 89 on July 13, 1868 to Emanuel R. Den. Ordinance 47 declared they were not to be included in Plaza Alameda or for public uses and revoked the dedication.

Ordinance No. 48 stated that blocks 58 and 59 were also dedicated in 1853 (58 is now the El Mirasol property). It conveyed them to Pedro Massini (1868) because he was in possession of them and they were not used as plazas. A two-block plaza is shown on the 1902 map of the city. The Alameda Plazas were enclosed with picket fences in 1874, and trees were planted. Eventually the plazas became overgrown and weed-infested. This condition was not entirely remedied until the formation of the Park Board. In 1888 a petition asking the City to erect a band or music stand to cost not less than \$250 was granted. The plazas were to be put in such condition as to render them attractive. A \$250 tool house was also authorized.

In 1909 Charles Mulford Robinson referred to the Alameda as having a "high order of merit". He recommended removal of the bandstand and narrowing of Santa Barbara Street so that the 2 squares could be brought closer together. He mentioned the walkways and the specimen plantings, which had been installed under the direction of the Board of Park Commissioners - A. B. Doremus, superintendent. Dr. Doremus personally planted trees and shrubs, and replaced some of the earlier plantings. A plaque in his honor is mounted near the North East corner of Sola and Santa Barbara Streets. The plazas are still known for their specimen trees and shrubs. They are heavily used; contain a bandstand, restrooms, and maintenance buildings, and a totlot donated in honor of Sarah Foot, educator.

AMBASSADOR PARK

Size

.53 acres

Location

100 Block of West Cabrillo Boulevard

Date Acquired

April 8, 1924

From Whom

Trust and Savings Bank of L.A., a gift

Restrictions

Dedicated for public use (not to City)

History

This piece of land has a direct relationship to the old Potter Hotel which was opened in 1902 on the former Burton” Mound, the site of Chief Yanonali’s Chumash Indian village. The hotel’s promenade from the beach existed on this strip of land, framed by two rows of palm trees.

The hotel was renamed the Ambassador after 1918, and burned to the ground in 1921. The hotel area, after the City failed in an attempt to purchase it for a park, was subdivided into the Ambassador tract.

Ambassador Park contains the Burton Mound plaque designating the mound as a California State Historic Landmark.

In April 1969 a request to place a putting green in the park was denied on the premise that the park should remain an open, public green oasis in the midst of a row of motels.

ANDRÉE CLARK BIRD REFUGE

Size

42.42 acres

Location

East Cabrillo Boulevard near easterly City limits

Date Acquired

August 11, 1909

From Whom

Messrs. Edwards & Canfields, trustees for a group of public-spirited citizens, for \$7,364.

Restrictions

Purpose of public resort

History

The Bird Refuge area was historically a tidal marsh and salt pond. Much of the Lower East Side portion of the city had been composed of lagoons and marshes. In the 1870s and early 1880s Bradley's Race Track was located around the pond.

In 1906 the above mentioned group of citizens purchased the salt pond and surrounding land, including what later became the Municipal Tennis Courts. The 60 citizens contributed \$100 each to the purchase price in order to hold the land for public use. A 1909 election approved a City expenditure of \$7,000 to acquire the park site.

The City created the "Lake Park Improvement Fund" in 1910, but little was done until 1928. In August of that year Huguette M. Clark, owner of the Clark Estate across the boulevard from the salt pond, agreed to give the City \$50,000 to excavate the pond for an artificial freshwater lake, install planting, and construct walks and bridle paths.

The conditions set by Mrs. Clark prohibited the following: erection of a building, tent or other structure; camping concessions; boating and swimming; parking on Cabrillo Boulevard between Sycamore Creek and the Coast Highway (now Los Patos Way). Mrs. Clark stipulated that the name of the facility would be "Andrée Clark Bird Refuge" after her sister, and the City would provide maintenance and upkeep. The family donated more money in 1930 in order to complete the work based on plans by Ralph Stevens.

The 1924 Olmsted-Cheney Plan had recommended against a yacht harbor extension into the salt pond, saying it should be filled with fresh water and kept for park uses.

Over the years since the improvements were carried out there have been complaints of odor at the lake, as well as a lack of additional improvements. Proposals for various master plans have been made some in conjunction with plans for A Child's Estate.

BOHNETT (ANAPAMU) PARK

Size

Approximately 2.25 acres

Location

Northwest corner of San Pascual and Anapamu

Date Acquired

September 1, 1936

From Whom

J. H. McCune FOR \$1,960

Restrictions

None – for West Side playground

History

The park is located partially in and adjacent to the Old channel of Mission Creek. In his 1935 report to the City, park consultant Ralph Stevens commented that the populous West Side should have a playground or neighborhood park. The site he suggested was the subject property. A plan for Anapamu Park was discussed in 1936. It was improved in 1940 and contained facilities for archery, baseball, scout camping and summer programs.

Beginning in 1947 the park was used for “Camp Conestoga” a day camp for local children. At that time restrooms were constructed. The use ended in 1973.

The configuration of Anapamu Park was changed in the 1950s when one block of San Pascual Street was constructed adjacent to it on the east, and again in the mid 1960s when the Westside Boys Club was constructed on the Anapamu Street end of the park.

In February 1976, the Rotary Club of Santa Barbara offered funds, labor and materials to improve the park with the request that it be named for the late Floyd O. Bohnett, former mayor and Rotary International district governor. The offer was accepted in April and the park was renamed Bohnett Park.

CABRILLO BALL PARK

Size

5 acres

Location

Cabrillo Boulevard, Milpas & Punta Gorda Streets

Date Acquired

1925, 1926, 1927

From Whom

From several banks, bond issue funds

Restrictions

Public park and for public convenience and enjoyment

History

See “Cabrillo Boulevard-Palm Park” section. This park was acquired in five pieces, the Southerly portions of the purchase being used for the realignment of Cabrillo Boulevard in the late 1920s.

The park was improved with a baseball diamond and dressing rooms. During World War II it was used by teams from the armed services and for housing Army men from Camp Cooke. The dressing room-shower building was later removed.

CHILD'S ESTATE

Size

16 acres

Location

1300 Block East Cabrillo Boulevard, entrance on Niños Dr.

Date Acquired

November 1953

From Whom

Santa Barbara Foundation: a gift

Restrictions

Park, promotional, educational, cultural, or recreational uses

History

The knoll on which A Child's Estate park and zoo is located was the site of a very early Indian rancheria, or village. It was later in the Nidever family. The salt pond was adjacent to the east. In 1896 John Beale built a mansion at the top of the knoll and named it Vega Mar. Mr. Beale died in 1914 and Mrs. Beale married John Howard Child . The wooded property then became know as Child's Estate.

Mrs. Child permitted hoboes to live on a portion of her land located near the railroad. The men built huts of scrap materials and created a "hobo jungle"village.

In 1947 Mrs. Child left her estate to the Santa Barbara Foundation. The foundation donated it to the City in 1953. The pink stucco mansion was used as a caretaker's residence, then as a fraternity house. The City burned down the house in 1959, and the following year the Garden Club of Santa Barbara donated money to clean up the property.

The Junior Chamber of Commerce worked with the park Commission and Department to study possible uses. The Jaycees pledged \$10,000 to develop a plan. Child's Estate Foundation was formed in 1961, and a public fund raising campaign was conducted. The City leased the property to the foundation. A tremendous amount of volunteer labor, equipment, plants and money went to into the project in 1963-64.

A 1965 master plan included development of Dwight Murphy Field, Child's Estate and the Bird Refuge. The Child's Estate Foundation operates this very popular park and zoo.

DE LA GUERRA PLAZA

Size

.47 acres

Location

De la Guerra Street between State and Anacapa Streets

Date Acquired

Formal action 1855

History

Plaza De la Guerra was a public gathering place and festival area as far back as Santa Barbara's Mexican era. The plaza is located directly in front of the De la Guerra Adobe, which was built in the late 1820s and became the town's largest and most important residence. The adobe was built by Jose De la Guerra, a comandante of the Presidio, and the plaza was a natural and popular public commons. It is shown on the 1853 city map.

On August 8, 1855, the Council formally set aside and dedicated the area to the public for use as a Public Square or "plaza". At the same time Ordinance No 3 1/2 named it "Plaza de la Guerra".

Development of the plaza into a park form did not occur until 70 years later. In 1874 a two-story brick city hall was constructed in the plaza, facing De la Guerra Street. The building also contained a firehouse, jail, and municipal court. The two tallest palm trees in the southerly portion of the plaza were planted on either side of city hall's rear entrance. The plaza became known as "City Hall Plaza".

In 1909 Charles Mulford Robinson wrote "The incongruous red firehouse and city hall, sticking into the Plaza like a sore thumb, out to come out. The presence of such a building in such a place...is a disgrace to Santa Barbara." He recommended conversion of the property to a park, construction of buildings in an adobe style between the plaza and State Street, and the preservation of Casa de la Guerra. All of this was eventually accomplished

After World War I city hall was remodeled into the then popular Mission Revival style, with stucco façade and a tower. The old city hall was demolished in 1923 and the present building was constructed adjacent to the plaza. In early 1925 citizens debated whether the plaza should be filled with large trees or with grass, flowers and a fountain.

Immediately following the 1925 earthquake U. S. Marines billeted in tents on the plaza and the Navy's communication center occupied another tent. Citizens who were afraid to return to their homes slept in the plaza.

During World War II the plaza was used for bond rallies and exhibits. In recent years it has been frequently used by citizens and organizations for demonstrations, celebrations, and concerts. There is a State Historic Landmark plaque at the north edge of the plaza facing De la Guerra Street.

DWIGHT MURPHY FIELD

Size

10 ½ acres

Location

Por la Mar Drive at Southern Pacific tracks

Date Acquired

1925

From Whom

Pacific Southwest Trust & Savings Bank, bond issue

History

This property was purchased in the same decade, as were most of the East Beach area lands. It became known as the Municipal Soccer Field. In September 1933 the field was dedicated and named for Dwight Murphy, civic leader who served as Park Commission chairman from 1927 to 1931. Improvements were made with Depression-era funds.

In 1937 the State College and City Council proposed to withdraw a portion of Dwight Murphy Field for use as the college's football stadium. La Playa Field was chosen instead. This park has been used extensively as a sports field. During World War II Army troops used it for recreation and training. New restroom and locker facilities were constructed in 1969. Dwight Murphy Field is now very popular with soccer clubs. In January 1976 the Bicentennial Freedom Train was parked on a railroad siding abutting the field, with entertainment and exhibits in the nearby public areas.

CABRILLO YOUTH CENTER AND PAVILION EAST BEACH

See “East Cabrillo Boulevard – Palm Park” section.

EL MIRASOL PROPERTY

2021 Note: This is now Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden.

Size

4.63 acres

Location

City block bounded by East Arrellaga, Garden, Santa Barbara and East Micheltorena Streets

Date Acquired

December 1976

From Whom

Anonymous Donor

Restrictions

1. To be used for a free public City park in perpetuity.
2. The donor will select a name and select or install an appropriate marker.
3. The donor will landscape and furnish the park, with plans prepared by representatives of the Botanic Garden.
4. The landscape design will not be changed by the City without donor's written approval.
5. City shall maintain the planting and shall consult with the Botanic Garden's representative.
6. The donor will provide a maintenance fund of the \$7,500 per year for a period of five years.

History

The El Mirasol property, City Block 58, was one of the original Plaza Alameda blocks. In 1868 the City conveyed the block to Pedro Massini because it was not used as a plaza. The land remained vacant until Mrs. Christian Herter built her mansion in the first decade of this century.

Mrs. Herter died in 1913 and left the property to her son, the artist Albert Herter. The villa was furnished with art objects and featured hand painted murals. Albert Herter constructed one-story cottage around the property, leaving a large lawn area in the center, behind the main house, which faced on East Micheltorena Street. In August 1914 the El Mirasol Hotel was opened, and became a part-time residence for wealthy visitors. The hotel's name, Spanish for "the sunflower", was selected in a contest.

In later years the hotel changed owners several times. Jacob Seldowitz purchased the property in 1965 and filed unsuccessful requests for a multi-story hotel and apartments. Fires damaged the El Mirasol's main facilities and the residents moved elsewhere. Mr. Seldowitz demolished the hotel and sold the block in 1968.

A local investment group purchased the site and applied for a height variance for two multi story apartment structures. The controversial case ended in a court victory for the project's opponents, and in 1970 the land was sold for a new Santa Barbara Museum of Art site. The Museum board conducted a fund raising campaign, then changed its plans and decided to add onto the State Street museum building.

In December 1975 accountant Reginald Faletti and attorney Robert M. Jones notified the City Council of their anonymous client's gift park offer. Prior to this time the site had been used as an experimental garden by the Community Environmental Council.

In March 1977 a landscape plan for the new park was presented to the City.

EQUESTRIAN CIRCUS

History

The “Equestrian Ring” was acquired by the City in 1927 for a powerhouse site. It was then listed as Water Department property. In January 1971, staff requested its transfer to the Park Department accounts. In May of that year a citizen asked for community use of it as a riding ring, with a local firm to prepare plans for it. The plans were approved in January 1972.

The property is located immediately east of the City Limits line and Mission Creek just south of Foothill Road. It contains 5.46 acres.

Note, 2021: Equestrian Circus was renamed **Equestrian Circle** in 1980.

ESCONDIDO PARK

Size

2 acres

Location

1306 Flora vista Drive

Date Acquired

November 1947 as part of Escondido Reservoir

History

In June 1955 the Fellowship Heights Improvement Association requested that the City set aside a portion of the Escondido Reservoir property for a park and play area. Approval was given, a tennis court was constructed, and a restroom was moved to the site from Spencer Adams Park.

Later a new tennis court and other improvements were donated by the neighborhood residents. In March 1963 the 2 acre piece of land was transferred to the Park Department's care. Further improvements were carried out in 1968 at the request of the neighbors.

In 1974 City Council transferred the care of all Water Resources Division land to the Park Division. The combined size of this land is 5.72 acres.

FRANCESCHI PARK

Size

15 + acres

Location

1510 Mission Ridge Road

Dates Acquired

Major portion June 1931; smaller additions 1962, 1964, and 1976

From Whom

Freeman Investment Company; a gift

Additions

E. French, W. & R. Hackett, K. Bruington

Restrictions

Park and recreation purposes

History

In 1904 an Italian Botanist, Emanuele Orazio Fenzi (Francesco Franceschi), purchased 40 acres on Mission Ridge and built a mansion, which he called Montarioso. Dr. Franceschi operated a plant nursery on lower State Street, introducing many useful plants and fruits to this area. The Montarioso property contained numerous specimen plants.

The family sold the land in 1927 and in June 1929 a local resident, Alden Freeman, offered the 14-acre property to the City for two parks. The piece northerly of Mission Ridge Road was to be called "Dr. Francesco Franceschi Park", and the southerly piece "Geore A. Batchelder Park". In July the City declined the offer because of the land's topography and the expense of maintaining it.

In April 1931 the offer was renewed. In June the Riviera Association guaranteed payment of \$1500 annually for two years for park maintenance. The Park Commission recommended acceptance for a tropical garden. George Batchelder requested that the lower portion be named for Alden Freeman. The City accepted Mr. Freeman's offer in July 1931 on condition that the land is used for park and recreation purposes for the benefit of residents of the city, and any revenue to be used for maintenance and improvement. The park became a well-known horticultural attraction to botanists and arborists.

Miss Pearl Chase worked hard in later years for the two additions to the park and for completion of a master plan for it. In 1962 the Park Commission recommended that the Franceschi residence be demolished because of its condition. City Council appointed a restoration advisory committee, which recommended that the house be retained, with repair work done. A little has been accomplished.

The house was used for horticultural classes in the 1940s and later as an employee's residence. In 1976 a builder gave a 3,740 square foot piece of land on Mission Ridge Road, to become part of the lower park. This resulted from complaints that two houses he had constructed to the east had blocked the view from the vista turnout

GOULD PARK

Size

306+ acres

Location

North from Mountain Drive, between Cold Springs Road and Ashley Road (outside City Limits)

Date Acquired

June 1, 1926

From Whom

Charles W. And Clara H. Gould; a gift

Restrictions

Retain solely and exclusively as recreation ground and for park purposes

History

This mountainous property has not been developed by the City since its acquisition. In 1932 the City signed a license agreement with Southern California Edison Company to construct and maintain a transmission line over the northerly portion of Gould Park. The agreement has been renewed regularly.

In December 1932 the park Commission discussed developing the land for a recreational park. The matter was dropped because it was said only a small part of it could be used.

HALE PARK

Size

13.04 + acres

Location

Between Camino Viejo and Eucalyptus Hill Road

Date Acquired

April 1, 1954; small addition on August 28, 1962

From Whom

Kathleen B. Hale; addition from Markham and Margaret Salsbury; a gift

Restrictions

Public purposes for park, promotional, educational, cultural or recreational uses.

History

Hale Park is part of what was the Frederick J. Peabody estate, "Solana".

The City named this gift park after its donor, with her approval. In 1959 permission was granted to the Santa Barbara archery Club to erect a small clubhouse and to use the park for archery. This use ceased in 1973.

HIDDEN VALLEY PARK

Size

18 + acres; exact acreage unknown at this time

Location

Along Calle de los Amigos

Dates Acquired

1960s and 1970s

From Whom

Subdividers and developers

Restrictions

For park purposes

History

This park is located in and immediately adjacent to Arroyo Burro Creek south of U. S. 101. The Las Positas y la Calera land grant encompassed the Hidden Valley area as well as Hope Ranch and Las Positas Valley. Later the Rutherford, Williams and Parks families operated orchards in the area.

In 1960 the lower portion of the park was deeded to the City as a condition of the Hidden Valley Subdivision. In 1963 additions were made to it by the Baptist Homes (Valle Verde) development. Later, as the Casa la Cumbre condominium developments were constructed, the northerly portions of the park were deeded to the City.

The Hidden Valley Protective and Improvement Association donated \$1,000 for a master plan of Hidden Valley Park in 1970. The plan was approved, but final plans have not as yet been prepared.

HILDA MCINTYRE RAY PARK

Size

1.50 acres

Location

1420 Kenwood road

Date Acquired

March 1958, April 1959, June 1961

From Whom

Presto H. Ray; a gift

Restrictions

Public park

History

In December 1957, Presto Ray offered his home and scenic view property to the City in memory of his late wife, Hilda mcintyre Ray. A condition of the offer was that Mr. Ray be granted a life estate in the house and yard. City Council accepted the offer of the land as a "public park for the benefit of the citizens and inhabitants of the City of Santa Barbara". At the same time the park was named for Mrs. Ray.

Improvements were made to the park soon after its acquisition. Mr. Ray moved from the park residence in 1961 and it is used by the park caretaker.

HONDA VALLEY PROPERTY

Size

20.10 acres

Location

Miramonte Drive

Date Acquired

April 1970

From Whom

Santa Barbara Highlands Company

History

This tree-studded arroyo was acquired as a condition of approval by City Council of the Santa Barbara Highlands garden apartment development. The land has never been developed. The street now known as Miramonte Drive was constructed through the Honda Valley in the late 1950s when research and development zoning was placed on part of the valley. The street was then called Hoffman Drive after a research firm located next to the television station.

In 1961 the Planning Commission had suggested that some of this valley be acquired for a park.

LA CORONILLA PARK

Size

1.50 acres (portion of reservoir site)

Location

740 Dolores Drive

Date Acquired

Reservoir site purchased April 1953

History

In August 1960 the residents of La Coronilla Subdivision requested a park in their area. They said it was represented to purchasers that a park would be provided as a result of an agreement between the City and the subdivider. The request was referred to the Mayor, and in September it was decided to prepare a park on the Vic Trace Reservoir property by installation of drainage facilities at public expense and with the cooperation of the contractor.

In 1963 City Council authorized maintenance of the surplus property (then called Dolores Playground) as a park.

LA MESA PARK

Size

8.87 acres

Location

295 Lighthouse Road

Date Acquired

June 1953, and August 1973

From Whom

U.S.A. for \$3,904

History

In 1856 the U. S. Government built a 30-foot lighthouse on 28 acres it had just purchased on the Mesa. The Lighthouse was electrified in 1921, then destroyed by the 1925 earthquake. An automated lighthouse was built on the same site and serves to this day.

By 1935 the residential neighborhoods of the Mesa were being developed and the City requested that the federal government transfer to it the unused portion of the lighthouse property. The government considered a transfer to the State, but then transferred the land to the Department of Agriculture. It was given over to the custody of the Forestry Office, and trees and shrubs were planted on the land.

The Park Commission, in 1937, asked that the City acquire 27 acres of lighthouse property, but suggested that the City pay for it. The Mesa Improvement Association pointed out that there were no City recreational grounds in the entire area and asked that City Council offer \$1.00 per acre to buy the land. World War II intervened and the War Department used the land. In 1946 the Forestry people decided they could relinquish the site because it was not suitable for their auto repair plant and warehouse. They deferred to the Coast Guard's need for a custodian's residence.

In October of 1946 City Council instructed the City Attorney to pursue the acquisition application diligently. In the meantime the County proposed a State highway through the land. If accomplished, it would have been an extension of Shoreline Drive. The improvement association, Park and Planning Commissions continued to support the park request. Then the School Board requested part of the land.

The property was withdrawn from surplus during the Korean War, but in August 1952 the City adopted a resolution of application for acquisition for public park and recreational purposes. The transfer of 6.8 acres for the sum of \$3,904 finally took place in June 1953. The City Schools obtained 8.2 acres, the Civil Air Patrol 3 acres, and the remainder was Coast Guard and right-of-way land.

In 1955 plans for a neighborhood park were drawn. The improvement association and other organizations urged development of the park. In 1956 a building was donated and the City moved it onto the park site. Harriet Cowles gave money for improvements and in 1957 the Jaycees donated \$2,000 for play equipment contingent upon construction of a fence. The association requested a community building in 1964.

In August 1973 the Department of the Interior gave the City an additional 1.7 acres, part of the Coast Guard land.

LAS POSITAS PARK

Size

92.71 acres

Location

Las Positas Road (State Highway 225)

Dates acquired

March 1942, November 1950, 1973

Costs

\$5,000; \$20,000; \$70,000

Restrictions

None

History

Las Positas Park site is part of the historic Las Positas y la Calera land grant. The famed Veronica Springs were situated across Las Positas Road, and were a popular attraction in the late 19th and early 20th century.

The northerly piece of land was purchased in 1942 from the Fox family for a dumpsite. The southerly piece was acquired from the Novitiate of Los Gatos. The property was used as the City sanitary fill site until the County's South Coast facility was put to use. The 8.71 acres acquired in 1973 was purchased from the School District.

In February 1965 conversion of the dump to a sports center was proposed. In March the Recreation Commission recommended immediate action to plan and develop a major recreation area on the site. City Council formed the "Joint Park Development Committee" which recommended a letter of intent for cooperation between the City and the School Board, analysis of the land, and invitations for master plan development. The Council agreed to apply for State funds and a consultant prepared a master plan for the entire site.

Development has been stalled by unavailability of funds, but in 1969 tennis court plans were approved and construction with City and State funding took place in 1972.

In 1975 City staff was instructed to pursue alternate uses for Las Positas Park

LAUREL CANYON PARK

Size

6.17 acres

Location

Laurel Canyon Road

Date Acquired

March 1952, no cost

From Whom

County National Bank (A. Robertson and W. Hill)

Restrictions

None

History

The undeveloped canyon land was deeded to the City as part of the larger Johnston Annexation, for a filtration plant site. Other land was purchased across the canyon for the filtration plant, however. In May 1971 the park and Recreation Commissions recommended that the land be dedicated for park and recreation use. Apparently Council approval did not take place.

LEADBETTER BEACH

History

Leadbetter Beach is situated below Leadbetter Hill, formerly called Dibblee Hill after the well-known family, which owned the area and had construction on it the mansion “Punta del Castillo”. The ‘castillo’ after which the nearby street was also named, was the Presidio-era gun battery located near the site of the mansion. City College now stands on Dibblee, or Leadbetter Hill.

Castle Rock, the popular tourist attraction of the beginning of the century, was located in the vicinity of the present beach. Until the construction in recent years of the Shoreline Drive connection, West Cabrillo Boulevard ended at Leadbetter Drive, now the southerly end of Loma Alta Drive.

Leadbetter Beach was used for a children’s summer day camp until the breakwater construction made the beach too wide. It was a popular viewing spot for the Fourth of July fireworks and Semana Nautica activities. The beach became a beach park in 1965 when it was extensively improved.

LEADBETTER PARK

(Now considered part of Pershing Park)

Size

3 to 4 acres

Location

W. Montecito Street, Behind Pershing Park parallel to Castillo Street, at foot of Leadbetter Hill.

Date Acquired

April 1925

From Whom

F.W. & Caroline Leadbetter for \$10

Restrictions

Park purposes, no zoo

History

This park was part of the Leadbetter Estate where City College is now located. In 1925, just before the earthquake destroyed their mansion on the hill, Mr. And Mrs. Leadbetter gave the easterly foot of the hill to the City. It adjoined the Old Plaza del Mar to the South. The land contained fine trees and a swamp, which the City proposed to fill to permit tennis court construction.

The Park was named for the donors, and was used in conjunction with Pershing Park for the horse show arena. In the deed “park purposes” is defined as “children’s playground, tennis courts, athletic purposes by the general public, general planting for use...as a park.”

In the 1960s and 70s the flat portion of the land was developed for athletic purposes by the Community College District, under a joint use agreement with the City. In 1976 the district improved the old estate’s driveway as a secondary access to the campus.

LOMA MEDIA PARK

Size

.56 acres

Location

Alameda Padre Serra and Loma Media Road

Date Acquired

January and February 1926

From Whom

Westerly piece gift from William R. Staats Company, easterly piece from Pacific SW Bank

Restrictions

Westerly piece – none; easterly piece for public park purposes

History

Mark Bradley was the agent for the gift offer, which included \$1,000 toward improvements. This gift park has remained undeveloped. In the 1940s the Park Department said it was not practical for park use. The Park Commission recommended its sale in 1945.

LOS BAÑOS DEL MAR POOL

Size

2.87 acres

Location

West Cabrillo Boulevard, foot of Castillo Street

Date Acquired

June, 1934

From Whom

Edison Securities Company

History

The general area of the Fossil Hill – Bath Street part of Santa Barbara’s waterfront was always popular with swimmers. Private bathhouses were operated near Fossil Hill in the 1880s. In 1889 a Mr. Wilson was granted a lease to construct a bathhouse for not less than \$2,000.

The City itself built a larger bathhouse in 1901. This ocean-water “Baños del Mar” contained a heated indoor pool, a bowling alley, billiard parlor, roof deck, and outdoor bandstand. The bathhouse burned in 1913 and the electric company constructed a new facility, opening it in April 1915.

This popular bathhouse was damaged in the 1925 earthquake, and was closed temporarily. In 1929 an agreement was made to purchase Los Baños del Mar from the electric company for \$60,000. The purchase was recorded for \$5,000 less in 1934.

By 1935 the Park Board recommended demolition of the pool building because of its poor condition, and construction of an open-air pool. The proposed demolition was controversial, especially since a planned extension of West Cabrillo Boulevard would cut through Plaza del Mar and the bathhouse site. The old building was demolished in 1937. The presently existing outdoor Los Baños del Mar was constructed across the new boulevard extension right of way from what was left of Plaza del Mar. It was built for \$68,000 with federal funding assistance and opened in 1939. The street extension took place in 1943.

MACKENZIE PARK

Size

9.55 acres

Location

State Street near Las Positas Road

Date Acquired

1. April 1956
2. May 1956

From Whom

1. County Housing Authority
2. Public Housing Administration for \$39,736.66 (including golf course land across Las Positas Road)

Restrictions

1. Property to be used for public purposes for a period of at least ten years
2. State Street frontage never to be used commercially or industrially

History

The MacKenzie Park site, prior to World War II, was adjacent to Earl Ovington's airfield and to the early commercial area of Hollister Avenue (now State Street) near the City Limits. During the war the site was occupied by part of the United States Army's Hoff Hospital. After the war the former hospital buildings were used for public housing.

In 1954 local citizens urged two uses for the property – an U. S. Armory and a park. At the same time the 19th Agricultural District was considering moving its showgrounds from Pershing – Leadbetter parks to a northside site. The Recreation Commission proposed construction of an armory on the upper Hoff property, next to the Old Army water tank.

It was decided to purchase the property for a park, and the Samarkand Improvement Association joined in discussions of possible uses. In December 1959 an anonymous donor gave the City \$14,000 for development of the park. The existing buildings were removed in 1960 and the Northside Business Association donated a building for park use.

The City Council named the new park for the late park superintendent, Finlay MacKenzie, in December 1960.

A master plan was prepared and some park development was carried out. In 1968 park is used by older adults and contains bowling greens, a clubhouse, a trust fund for bowling green improvements was created. The upper level of the shuffleboard, etc. The lower level is used by youth, organizations, and for ball playing. The armory, Fremont Hall, is located at the corner of Las Positas and State Streets.

MENDOLA PROPERTY

Size

2.32 acres

Location

North Soledad Street, corner of East Yanonalli Street

Date Acquired

August 1970

From Whom

Santa Barbara Elementary School District; trade

History

In 1951 a civic committee recommended that the City purchase land across the street from Franklin School annex for a much-needed park. The land was purchased and in 1954 the park Commission recommended improvements, but only a lawn and watering system were put in.

A complicated land transfer between the school district and the City approved in 1969 transferred the above land to the district. The “Mendolia property” was transferred to the City for park use. It was completely overgrown with trees and shrubs, having been a part of the long established residential area.

The Park Division has cleared the underbrush. Neighboring residents have established a community garden on a portion of the unnamed park.

MISSION HISTORICAL PARK

Size

10.24 acres

Location

Laguna, E. Olivos Streets and Alameda Padre Serra to Mission Ridge Road

Dates Acquired

1928 – 1939 AND 1948

From Whom

Franciscan Fathers of California \$53,068.80 for 7.8 acres, remainder a gift

Restrictions

Shall be exclusively used and maintained as a public park site, for recreation ground or reservoir site, for the use and benefit of inhabitants of city and others. Large piece is for park purposes only, no structures other than restrooms.

History

Mission Historical Park consists of ruins of Mission Santa Barbara's old waterworks, tannery vats, grassed areas, and the City Rose Garden. The 8 acre piece directly across from the Mission was an open area owned by the Franciscan Fathers and contains a portion of the aqueduct wall. The 2 acre piece north of Alameda Padre Serra is of great historical importance because of the filter house, grist mill, pottery, a reservoir and aqueduct portions are located on it.

The lower reservoir, built in 1806, still serves the City water system and is situated on a separate piece of land adjacent to the 2 acre piece. The upper (small) reservoir was probably built in 1827, as was the grist mill. The reservoirs collected water from the two Indian built dams in Mission Canyon and Rattlesnake Canyon. The filter house on the Mountain Drive frontage of the park was built in 1806 and filtered water for the Mission's supply. The pottery was constructed in 1808, as were the fountain and lavadero on the Mission property.

These facilities, along with the Mission itself, are all designated California State Historical Landmark N. 309.

In 1909 Charles Mulford Robinson suggested that a paved court with a large crucifix be placed in front of the Mission, with the land containing the waterworks ruins to be made into a little historic park, with a garden featuring the ruins. Alameda Padre Serra was built through Mission land in 1912 to connect with Mountain Drive and Mission Canyon Road, and to provide a streetcar route to the State Normal School.

Following the post-earthquake repairs to the Mission the Franciscan Fathers offered the larger piece of land for sale. Private contributions were secured, and on June 30, 1928 the City Council agreed to pay \$37,000 over several years. The total of \$53,068.80 paid off in 1939 included interest and expenses.

The Park Board approved a master plan in 1940. The Fathers gave the two-acre piece to the City in 1948. In early 1954 the City prepared a plan showing Los Olivos Street being straightened through the park. Local citizens and organizations vigorously objected to the plan. In March 1957 City Council changed the park name from Mission Plaza (or Park) to

Mission Historical Park, as suggested by Miss Pearl Chase five years earlier. Park Commissioners again called for a redesign of the park and streets in 1970.

By 1961 the rose garden in the park was in very poor condition and the local Rose Society asked to sponsor it. Over the years the old bushes have been removed and new ones established. The Little Garden Club installed a fragrance garden for the blind in 1971. The park contains several commemorative plaques. It shares the Mission's California Landmark status.

MORETON BAY FIG TREE

Size

.38 acres

Location

Southwest corner of Chapala and West Montecito Streets

Date Acquired

November 30, 1976

From Whom

Southern Pacific Transportation Company

History

Captain Gaspar de Portola's 1760 expedition to colonize Alta California for the Spanish crown has direct historical ties with the environs of Santa Barbara's famed Moreton Bay Fig Tree. The land expedition included Franciscan Father Junipero Serra, who was to establish a chain of missions to assist with the colonization and Christianization of the huge area.

Sergeant Jose Francisco de Ortega, the group's trail scout, made camp near the tree's present site on August 14, 1769. Ortega, who later became the first commandante of Santa Barbara's Royal Presidio, is therefore thought to be the first "white man" to set foot on Santa Barbara soil.

A large Chumash Indian village, Siujtu, existed nearby on what became known as Burton's Mound. The hospitable Indians enthusiastically welcomed the soldiers with food, gifts and entertainment. During California's bicentennial year in 1969 a plaque commemorating Portola's visit was dedicated on the Montecito Street frontage of the big tree's greensward.

The great Moreton Bay fig tree (*Ficus Macrophylla*), a native of the Moreton Bay region of eastern Australia. It was planted near State and Montecito Streets, and when it became "as tall as a walking stick", 9 year old adelinecrabb and her mother, Hannah, transplanted the tree to its present site.

Santa Barbarans, and most experts, claim the tree to be the largest of its kind in the country. It was reported to have a 124-foot branch spread in 1935, 135 foot in 1939, and 144 foot in 1947 following damage from a severe wind in 1943. The 1960 measurement was 151 foot spread 60 feet height and 31 foot trunk circumference.

In November 1941 the City, with the support of the Botanic Garden, signed an agreement with the Southern Pacific Company to maintain and protect the tree, which was on land owned by the railroad. In the years immediately following, the tree was pruned and cabled, utility poles removed, and the grounds planted with lawn and shrubs.

The Moreton Bay Fig Tree became the City's first officially designated "tree of notable historic interest" in September 1970. The tree may therefore not be destroyed or cut down.

The Southern Pacific Transportation Company deeded the corner of land containing the tree to the City in late November 1976. There were no restrictions in the grant deed.

MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE

Size

108.6 acres

Location

Las Posital Road at mccaw Avenue

Date Acquired

1956

Restrictions

Property to be used for public purposes for a period of at least ten years. Property to be used for municipal purposes only.

History

The undeveloped golf course land was purchased at the same time as the MacKenzie Park property. It was acquired from the Public Housing Administration, County Housing Authority, and Nineteenth District Agricultural Association. Development took place in 1957.

Earle Ovinton's Casa Loma Airfield was located in the mccaw Avenue area of the present golf course in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The airfield was dangerous to use because of the nearby eucalyptus trees, and Ovington moved to "Low Field" on the Mesa for a time. The Casa Loma airfield was then used for an aircraft factory. A portion of the future golf course site was the location of the Army's Hoff Hospital during and after World War II.

MUNICIPAL TENNIS COURTS

Size

7.77 acres

Location

Old Coast Highway at Park Place

Date Acquired

August 11, 1909

Restrictions

Purpose of public resort

History

The tennis court property was purchased at the same time as the Bird Refuge. The stadium was built with Depression-era Federal funding. Four courts were built under a W.P.A. project. The courts totaled nine by World War II. Many tournaments were held there and additional courts were constructed in the 1960s. A total of twelve courts now exist in addition to the old stadium and clubhouse.

OAK PARK

Size

17+ acres

Location

West Alamar Avenue between Tallant Road and West Junipero Street

Date Acquired

1904

From Whom

Various property owners, bond issue

Restrictions

Public park and park purposes

History

The Oak Park area of Mission Creek has been a popular picnic and recreation spot for Santa Barbara since Spanish times. Before the turn of the Twentieth Century residents already referred to the creekside grove as “Oak Park”, although it was privately owned. Mission Creek, a full running stream, supported steelhead trout; native shrubs and small animals contributed to a pleasant playground for children.

In 1904 the land was under consideration for development and Henry Tallant, for whom Tallant Road is named, organized a campaign to save the park. Contributions were made by citizens and a \$15,000 bond issue was passed. In October 1904 Ordinance 490 created the Oak Park Fund to carry out the purpose of the bond issue. Most of the land purchases were made that year. A contract was signed in 1907 to build a road in the park, and the next year City Council said no trees were to be cut without permission.

In Dr. Doremus’ Park Board report of October 1908 he stated that nearly 100 live oak trees, some California maple and wild cherry trees were planted to replace oaks and sycamores lost in the past. He said there were swings, seesaws, tables and benches there. The next year Charles Mulford Robinson approved of a “wild, cañon-like” park with a pleasure drive on top of the hill.

A city streetcar line went as far as Oak Park, and great numbers of local people attended concerts and festivals at the park.

Construction began on the wading pool in March 1928.

During the Depression unemployed persons gathered logs and cut them into barbecue length at Oak Park for use at beaches and parks. In 1941 a dance floor was moved from Devereux Ranch to the parks. During World War II Oak Park was called the most popular park in Santa Barbara, partly as a result of gasoline rationing preventing out-of-town recreational travel. The group picnic area is always highly used.

In 1958 a school for the retarded was proposed near the park's northerly border, but the deed restrictions prevented the use. A 1909 plaque in honor of Henry Tallant is located at the corner of Alamar Avenue and West Junipero Street.

ORPET PARK

Size

4.2 acres

Location

North and South of Alameda Padre Serra at Moreno and Lasuen Roads

Date Acquired

1919 for \$2,917.58

From Whom

Edwards and Canfield, trustees

Restrictions

Park forever

History

This area of the Riviera was treeless and generally undeveloped until the construction of the State Normal School in 1912-13 spurred development of streets, houses and streetcar line.

In November, 1913, City Council declared that it favored the “plan to reserve a park of not less than 5 acres below and adjoining the Normal School on Mission Ridge and requests the Board of Park Commissioners to view the ground and report its recommendations on the plan and to ascertain whether the owners...are willing to enter into an agreement to reserve the required ground, or to give the City an option on the same.” A purchase fund was established.

In February 1918, the park Commission met on the site and decided to inform Council and the discussion by subscribers to the land purchase fund. In 1919 it was proposed that the City take over Hillside Park. The City Manager was given the power to consummate the purchase. Plans for planting the park were discussed in early 1920, and the Rivera Company advanced the money.

El Encanto Hotel, just above the park site, had begun as cottages for faculty and students of the Normal School. In early 1918 it opened as a hotel, featuring the newly built main structure.

Park Superintendent E. O. Orpet established the park as a horticultural showplace in 1921. Olmsted Brothers drew a plan. In March 1924 Mr. Batchelder of the Riviera Company asked to have the wires to the comfort station placed underground and said he would pay for it. In November the manager of El Encanto Hotel offered to have his men turn the park’s water on and off.

The planting of rare specimens in Hillside Park continued during the 1930s. In 1936 the Park Commission attempted to change the park” name to “Batchelder Park”. City council named the park for Mr. Orpet in April 1963.

A restroom-bus stop in the upper park was demolished in 1972. Over the years there has been some problem with encroachment on the lower park by neighboring property owners. Heavy pruning of the upper park’s trees and shrubs

caused controversy in early 1975. A committee of knowledgeable citizens stated that rare plants had been destroyed and deformed. A sprinkler system was later installed.

In early 1976 a group of volunteers repaired and renovated the City's remaining streetcar shelter on Alameda Padre Serra at the park's western edge. There are commemorative plaques in both upper and lower Orpet Parks. An inset in the northern-most walk provides three or four parking spaces.

ORTEGA PARK

Size

4.67 acres

Location

Block bounded by Ortega, Quarantina, Cota and Salsipuedes Streets

Date Acquired

June 1902

From Whom

Santa Barbara County National Bank for \$1,000.

Restrictions

None

History

City block 204 was purchased by the City in 1902 for a public dumping ground “by reason of its physical configuration and its location being suitable and proper for said purpose. The property consisted of swampy land which formed part of the east side drainage area, the old estero. It served as a town dump, also collecting debris from the 1925 earthquake.

Nearby residents complained of the dump’s stench and smoke and in 1927 the City engineer, Eugene B. Brown, proposed the sanitary fill system. In May of that year a bond issue for construction of a municipal incinerator at the dump had passed; however, objections to the burning of refuse were raised and in September City Council rejected the plan. Mr. Brown’s fill method reclaimed the land and he suggested its conversion to a park. The 1924 Olmsted-Cheney Plan had recommended park use.

Ordinance 1489 dated April 18, 1930 dedicated Block 204 as a City park. Later that year the park was named Ortega Plaza. The Park Commission had lawn, plantings, playground and picnic facilities installed in the 1930s. Two tennis courts and a baseball diamond were constructed. The park became an important part of the community’s youth recreation program.

The marion Nixon Welcome House was constructed at the northwest corner of the park. Mrs. John D. Graham donated \$10,000 for a playground in January 1952.

In 1968 a master plan and site improvements were called for, and in 1970 the park superintendent repeated the suggestion. A group of citizens requested the City to change the park’s name to Salazar Park in honor of a deceased Los Angeles newsman. In January 1971 the Park Commission recommended against change, suggesting that a facility in the park be named for Mr. Salazar. Council approved the name change, but a plebiscite in April favored “Ortega” and the park was officially named Ortega Park in May.

The park has been heavily used by groups and families. A master plan was approved in 1972 and ground breaking for the redevelopment project took place on January 4, 1975. City Council named the new dance floor in honor of Ruben Salazar.

Area organizations and residents who had worked to support the project took part in a gala opening ceremony on August 23, 1975.

Jose Francisco de Ortega, for whom the street and park are named, was a Mexican born member of the Spanish colonial army who served as pathfinder for the 1769 Portola expedition into California. He co-founded Santa Barbara Presidio in 1782 and later became its comandante. He retired at Refugio following an illustrious career, and his descendants still reside here. A plaque in his honor is located near the park's flagpoles.

PARMA PARK

Size

198+ acres

Location

Stanwood Drive

Date Acquired

December 1973

From Whom

Harold Parma, John Parma, Agnes Parma and Mary-Margaret Parma; a gift

Restrictions

For public park purposes and as a public park; no buildings or structures except those incidental to use as a public park; to be known as Parma Park

History

In October 1973, the Parma brothers offered their family ranch land to the City as a public park. The acreage had been bought by their father Giovanni B. Parma in the early 1890s. He planted olive trees for cultivation, but the olive farm project was given up when Mr. Parma died in 1912. The ranch land with its oak-dotted hills remained in the family.

No development has taken place under City ownership. A group of Cal Poly Pomona students conducted a use study of the park in July 1975.

PERSHING PARK

Size

5 acres

Location

Castillo Street one block from West Cabrillo Boulevard

Dates Acquired

1926-1927

From Whom

C. H. Carner, A. Cross, Southern California Edison Company for \$34,650 Total

Restrictions

None

History

A plowed playfield existed next to the electric company's power plant near Plaza del Mar. Before World War I it was known as Athletic park and school football games were played there. After the war the park was named for U. S. Army general and a horse show arena was built. The famed National Horse Show began there in 1919.

The park contained the city's only lighted softball diamonds and was heavily used. It also had bleachers and shower rooms. A "Laguna and Pershing Park Commission" was appointed in 1935 to report on activities, revenues and expenses at the parks. During World War II the Street Department maintained Pershing Park's ungrassed area under a special budget. Softball leagues from the armed forces used the diamonds.

During the 1930s and 1940s motorcycle races were held regularly at the park, accompanied by complaints from near by residents. The most frequent large-scale uses of Pershing Park were horse shows and community fairs. The horse shows were held in the adjacent Leadbetter park arena, with the stables located in northern portion of Pershing Park.

In 1946 the park Department was requested to take over maintenance of the park, and improvements were approved. In late 1947 the 19th District Agricultural Association requested a long term lease from the City for installation of a permanent horse show ring and other buildings. The City Recreation, Park and Planning Commissions all recommended against such a lease. The Association eventually located its facilities on Las Positas Road.

The University used the park's ball field while its campus was on Leadbetter Hill. Teenage road-e-os were held at the park. The City demolished the stables in 1958. City College took over the University's Mesa campus, and in 1962 a joint use agreement was signed between the City and the College District. The agreement was modified in June 1964 and called for the district to construct two ball diamonds, eight tennis courts and eight handball courts. In 1970 the remaining park structures were demolished.

The old streetcar barn on Old Spanish Days-owned land between Pershing Park and Plaza del Mar was demolished and an agreement with the City permitted construction of a new carriage museum and float storage barn in the northerly portion of Pershing Park. In the early part of the century Sexton's Nursery was near this area.

The Community College District proceeded to improve the park land with lighted athletic facilities. In 1976 the district improved the old access road extending along the side of Leadbetter Hill from Shoreline Boulevard. It was formerly the driveway to the Diblee-Leadbetter mansion.

PLAZA DEL MAR

Size

4.54 acres

Location

Castillo Street at West Cabrillo Boulevard

Date Acquired

1899, 1900 (PRESENT SITE)

From Whom

Dibblee Trustees and Chamber of Commerce for \$2,000.00

Restrictions

Park Purposes

History

Plaza del Mar is one of the oldest parks in the city, and, in its original form, was the most popular recreation area for many years. On the 1869-70 coastal maps the area is shown as a wetland. Part of the land was designated as a “public garden” following acquisition of the land as part of the 1891 ocean boulevard bond election. Ordinance No. 233 requiring construction of the boulevard stated “That part near the bluff at Castillo Street shall be covered with asphaltum or bituminous rock, with band stand, fountains, seats, and etc., as the Council may direct”.

The park extended from just northwest of the boulevard intersection with Castillo Street to the ocean. In 1893 Ordinance No. 259 prohibited selling or giving of intoxicants within 1600 feet of the public garden, commonly called the Plaza del Mar. Ordinance No. 291 prohibited the entry of vehicles or animals into the plaza. By 1898 the plaza was improved with two lawn rectangles, benches, palm trees, and wide walkways.

In 1899 the Chamber of Commerce bought from the Thomas B. Dibblee estate a tract of land to the NW and SE of Plaza del Mar. The Changer reserved a bathhouse site on it, with the condition that within two years the City would spend \$2,000 in improvements. Since the site was inadequate, the City deeded the Chamber more land in June 1900.

The City accepted \$3,200 in 1905 for the Sarah Harper memorial fountain. By 1908 the park Commission had filled most of the new land described as an “alkali swamp” by Dr. Doremus.

The plaza became the terminus of the streetcar line. It was a very popular spot for bathing, strolling, and enjoying band concerts. After being insulted in the press the City Council authorized a contribution of \$10 each week toward the cost of the Sunday afternoon concerts.

In 1909 C. M. Robinson suggested removal of the fountain and relandscaping. The Sheffield Memorial Fountain was built in 1917, and cement tennis courts were constructed in 1919 and 1924. The Plaza’s water system was seriously damaged by the 1925 earthquake. The construction of more elaborate bathhouses influenced the use and layout of the plaza, but the strongest impact was caused by the 1943 extension of Cabrillo Boulevard to Leadbetter Drive. The park was bisected

by the street, necessitating relocation of palm trees and recreational facilities. The present Los Baños del Mar was built across the boulevard. Some of the demolished improvements had been installed with Depression funds in 1939.

A more recent road building threat to Plaza del Mar occurred in 1971 when the State proposed to widen Castillo Street, a State Highway, to four lanes. This would have taken some of the parkland and caused removal of trees. The project was postponed indefinitely.

The plaza contains large, handsome trees and a band shell. The joint use agreement with the Community College District caused some changes to the plaza and its adjoining parklands in the 1960s and 70s. In 1976 the short road leading into the plaza was removed.

RATTLESNAKE CANYON

Size

452 acres

Location

Off Las Canoas Road above City Limits

Date Acquired

December 4, 1970

From Whom

Hobart O. Skofield for \$150,000 (shared by U.S.A., County, City); Erminie S. Reynolds

Restrictions

1. For public park and recreational use
2. City will adopt and enforce rules and regulations for use...maintain and preserve the character and natural beauty of the area
3. The site may not be sold, leased or otherwise transferred without prior written approval of the secretary of H.U.D.

History

The scenic Rattlesnake or Las Canoas, Canyon contains the second of Santa Barbara's mission-era dams. This dam, built on Rattlesnake Creek, post dates the 1807 Mission Creek dam. It was used to direct water to a stone aqueduct, which formed part of the Mission's water-works system. Portions of the aqueduct still exist.

An area near the top of the canyon is known as "Tin Can Shack Meadow". The name derives from a homesteader's cottage constructed of chaparral framing and kerosene can shingles and siding. The owner of that 160 acre homestead was a lather in town, and his cabin was mentioned in a 1910 leaflet. The cabin was destroyed by a 1925 forest fire. Some of the tin may still be seen on the meadow.

A wagon road went up beyond the meadow to sandstone cliffs, from which stone was cut for Santa Barbara's curbs, walls, and hitching posts. Picnicking took place in the area, but storms washed out portions of the road in 1914-15.

Hobart Skofield became the appreciative owner of this beautiful canyon. In January 1970, he offered 450 acres to the City for the below-market price of \$150,000. Numerous local organizations urged the City to accept the offer. The Park and Recreation Commissions recommended the acquisition as being consistent with General Plan.

City Council decided to seek ways to pay for the land and a committee was formed. The acquisition committee recommended county participation and application for a \$75,000 U.S. Housing and Urban Development "open space" grant. The County Board of Supervisors cooperated by placing \$37,500 in its 1970-71 budget to assist with the purchase.

Mr. Skofield added to the offer a triangular piece of land at the road and bridge, which joined the canyon property to Skofield Park. The HUD application was approved in June, 1971.

In 1971 the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation donated funds and labor to repair the old Indian-built dam. Hobard Skofield and his sister Erminie S. Reynolds also contributed money to the effort.

SAN ROQUE PARK

Size

.50 Acre

Location

Canon Drive near Chuparosa Drive

Date Acquired

February 1939

From Whom

San Roque Country Club, a gift

Restrictions

To be used for and devoted solely and only to park purposes, becoming a part of the city park system.

History

The San Roque Park subdivision included provision for a country club for the property owners. This country club, incorporated in 1926, did not function as a club and eventually turned over its parks, San Roque and San Roque Cañon (Stevens), to the city. The subject park was offered to the City in March 1934, but the Park Commission said there would be too much responsibility and work involved to accept at that time.

Another offer for San Roque Park was made in December 1938, accepted by City Council in January 1939, and the deed recorded in February. The park had been maintained for about 10 years prior to the gift, and had been improved with lawn, plants and a sprinkler system.

SHORELINE PARK

Size

15 acres

Location

Shoreline Drive from lamarina to west of San Rafael

Date Acquired

1966 FROM Thomas P. Hart et al for \$852,844.96

Restrictions

None

History

The portion of the Mesa containing Shoreline Park consisted of farmland until the 1920s. The Low and Babcock farms extended from Cliff Drive to the present park's bluffs. What is now the park was left as vacant land following construction of the Marine Terrace subdivisions and Shoreline Drive in the early 1950s.

By 1963 City residents feared this bluff land would be developed for residential use, thus blocking off public views and access. Indeed, there had been attempts to rezone the land for apartments. A group of citizens urged that the City purchase the land for a park. In November 1963 City Council passed a resolution condemning the land for park and recreational purposes.

The ad hoc Save Our Shoreline Committee campaigned to convince voters to approve a bond issue for park acquisition and development. The effort was successful, and the \$1,020,000 ballot proposal carried on August 4, 1964. The City applied for Federal land and Water Conservation Fund money to help with acquisition costs, and in August 1967 the sum of \$325,000 was received.

The park was commonly known as "the shoreline park", and in June 1967 La Mesa Improvement Association suggested a contest to select an official name. This was done, and the name chosen by the judges was "Shoreline Park". City Council concurred on August 1, 1967. Later attempts to change the name were unsuccessful.

A local landscape architect was hired to design the park's improvements, and the formal dedication took place on December 14, 1968. A plaque in memory of the late Congressman Charles M. Teague was installed at the east end of Shoreline Park on January 28, 1974

SILWAN PARK

Size

.75 acres

Location

Alameda Padre Serra at Dover Road

Date Acquired

June 1931

From Whom

Freeman Investment Company; a gift

Restrictions

Park and recreation purposes, any revenue to be used for maintenance

History

The small pleasant corner property was offered by Alden Freeman to the City in 1929, as was Franceschi Park. It was known as Lot 25, Marine Acreage, and was adjacent to Mr. Freman's home. The offered land was known as Silwan Park. The offers were renewed in April 1931, with Silwan to be held in trust until the City acceptance.

In 1945 the park Commission recommended sale of both Silwan and Loma Media Parks. The adjacent owner wished to buy Silwan Park for \$1,000, but City Council said all City properties should be surveyed and the unuseful ones placed on the ballot for a vote to sell.

The Riviera Association suggested in 1950 that the park be sold and the proceeds used for improvements to Franceschi Park. Silwan Park contains stone and cement walks and a waterway, as well as a decorative wall, which were part of the Freeman estate.

The origin of the park's name is obscure. Some records show it as "Silvan" or "Sylvan."

SKOFIELD PARK (CAMP)

Size

35 acres

Location

Las Canoas Road

Date Acquired

September 1, 1964

From Whom

Los Rancheros Visitadores for \$145,000

Restrictions

Park and Recreational purposes

History

Los Rancheros Visitadores, the well known men's riding group, was founded in 1930 in Santa Barbara. The name was suggested by T. Wilson Dibblee, and the founders included Ed Borein, Sam Stanwood, Elmer Awl, Ray Skofield, Dwight Murphy, T. M. Storke, Sam Kramer and Jack Mitchell.

The riders needed a camp in which to gather before riding to Mission Santa Ines. Hobart Skofield, the son of Ray Skofield, owned acreage in the Las Canoas area, as had his father. He built a road and other facilities on these 35 acres, and the Rancheros first used portions of the land as a camp in 1937.

During World War II the treks were suspended and the camp was not used. Treks resumed in 1946 and Skofield Camp was used annually. Los Rancheros asked Hobart Skofield, a R.V. member and trustee of its Los Adobes property downtown to sell the camp to the organization. He did so in about 1950 for \$15,000.

Los Rancheros built more campsites, installed utility equipment, developed the north side of the creek, and put in the parking area. Some of the campsite names were "Los Amigos", "Maverick", "Los Vaqueros", "Los Borrachos" (drunk) "Los Gringos", "Los Flojos", (lazy), and "Vigilantes". The R. V.'s also permitted youth groups to use the camp.

As the Las Canoas area became more densely developed with residences, it became more difficult for Los Rancheros to ride to the Mission in light traffic. In May 1954 the organization offered its land to the City. The Park and Recreation Commissions and Planning Department all recommended favorably. City Council approved the purchase in May, to be out of ordinary revenues.

The Park Commission recommended the name "Skofield Camp" and suggested that Elmer Awl be in general charge of it. He was secretary of Los Rancheros Visitadores and a Park Commissioner at the time.

The park was threatened by the great Coyote Fire in 1964, and its caretaker was commended for heroic work. A restroom building was moved onto the land from La Coronilla Park in 1965.

STEVENS PARK

Size

25 + acres

Location

Canon Drive to Foothill Road and north of Foothill Road

Dates Acquired

1939, 1958, 1969

From Whom

San Roque Country Club, M. & G. Lotspeich, Constance Lazear; last 14.6 acre piece for \$35,500; partial gift

Restrictions

Park purposes only, park and recreation purposes

History

The former San Roque Canon Park (5 1/2 acres) was one of two parks turned over to the City in 1939 by the San Roque Country Club, Inc., which was formed in 1926 as part of the San Roque Park subdivision. The beautiful creek canyon area was not developed for some years.

In January 1956 the Park Commission recommended that the park property be renamed “Ralph Stevens Park” in honor of the park commissioner and former park superintendent. Stevens, a landscape architect, designed and improved many public and private properties in Santa Barbara and Montecito. City Council concurred in the recommendation and the next year the park was dedicated and a plaque installed at the entrance.

Mr. And Mrs. Martin Lotspeich offered a steep 3.77-acre parcel north of Foothill Road for City park purposes in 1958. The offer was accepted in November 1958.

A lot split proposed by Constance D. Lazear in late 1968 resulted in the suggestion that 14.6 acres of her land abutting the former Lotspeich piece be acquired for park use. Numerous local citizens and organizations supported the idea. A committee appointed by City Council recommended favorably, and the land was purchased in May 1969 for \$35,500. Now a continuous canyon park reaches up San Roque Canyon to the historic trails of the Santa Ynez Range.

STORKE PLAZA

Size

5,763 Square Feet

Location

Between State Street and De la Guerra Plaza

Date Acquired

November 30, 1973

From Whom

Thomas More Storke Foundation

Restrictions

To be maintained and preserved by the News Press Publishing Company

History

This property was developed with retail and office uses until the 1925 earthquake. It is adjacent to the narrow “Caesar’s Alley”, which was named for an early City Councilman, Caesar Lataillade. The alley was designated a public thoroughfare in 1914.

The Storke Investment Company acquired the lot, which opened the view of and access to the News Press building from State Street. In December 1972 the parcel was offered to the City as a minipark in memory of Thomas M. Storke, founder and editor of the News Press who had died the previous year. In January 1973 the Park Commission recommended acceptance of the offer.

The Thomas M. Storke Foundation agreed to pay the property tax and assessment district tax due on the lot. In August the City Council passed a resolution accepting the gift.

SUNFLOWER PARK

Size

19,125 square feet

Location

1124 East Mason Street

Date Acquired

November, 1972

From Whom

Katherine W. Tremaine; a gift

Restrictions

Solely and exclusively for park purposes and no other purposes whatsoever; to be used as a park by members of the public, for the public health, pleasure and recreation . . . No portion to be used as a road or parking place for automobiles or any other kind of vehicle larger than a bicycle.

History

The Sunflower Park site was originally part of a large property containing a residence. In August 1971 the Park Commission recommended acceptance of Katherine W. Tremaine's offer to purchase this East side lot and improve it as public park. Her generous proposal called the project "Sunflower Park" and described its planned uses. On August 10 City Council accepted the offer; Mrs. Tremaine bought the lot and installed the improvements. As the final stage of the arrangement, the deed was accepted by the City.

THORNBURY PROPERTY

Size

28.10 acres

Location

Below Miramonte Drive and Harbor Hills Drive

Date Acquired

December 1973

From Whom

Marie J. Thornbury; a gift

Restrictions

Solely for open space purposes for a period of twenty-five years after acceptance; thereafter, solely exclusively and perpetually for park purposes. While property is used solely for open space purposes, it shall remain in its natural state without structures or buildings of any kind except as may be necessary or desirable in order to prevent erosion, provided that landscaping and/or riding trails may be constructed and used.

History

This alta Mesa acreage is a partly-natural canyon area. The adjacent Santa Rita Hills subdivision caused the depositing of some excess earth in the canyon. William Thornbury, developer of the subdivision, also owned the canyon land. In late 1973 his widow offered the 28 acres as a gift to the City, subject to the listed restrictions. The offer was accepted at a special City Council meeting.

THOUSAND STEPS (CAMINO AL MAR)

Location

Seaward end of Santa Cruz Boulevard

History

City records indicate that the former “Trail to the Beach” was named “Camino al Mar” in 1923 and referred to as a “thorough-fare.” The steps apparently constructed about that time. Over the years the steps down to the sea, with their retaining walls, covered sections and lights, becoming badly deteriorated.

In May 1974 City Council approved a rehabilitation proposal to repair the steps and walls. The work was done on contract with a \$15,260 appropriation from the Federal Assistance Trust Fund.

VERA CRUZ PLAZA

Size

1.60 acres

Location

East Cota Street between Anacapa & Santa Barbara Streets

Date Acquired

Designated a public square on April 23, 1853

Restrictions

Public park; designated “Vera Cruz Park” in 1855 by Ordinance 3.5

History

Plaza de Vera Cruz is one of the City’s original plazas and is shown on the 1853 Wackenreuder maps as a larger park extending across Cota Street.

In October 1870, a petition of the trustees of the common schools of the Santa Barbara district asked for a deed to a portion of the Plaza de Vera Cruz for the erection of a public school building. After discussion and a legal report, city Council (board of trustee) passed a resolution stating it had no right to grant the plaza forever. A vote of the people would be required. The board did have the authority, however, to lease land upon request. It favored leasing the fenced portion of the park, but not the portion between Cota and Haley Streets because it was used for public ingress and egress. Eventually the land was transferred, however, and became part of the old Lincoln School site.

Trees were planted in the parks and plazas, and in 1873 fencing for one block of Vera Cruz was authorized. In April 1875 William Dewlaney was granted permission to cultivate pumpkins in Plaza Vera Cruz on payment of \$12.00.

A local women’s organization asked that the plaza be improved for a playground in 1905.

Dr. Doremus, in his 1908 report, said the plaza had been converted from a city dumping ground into a playground with swings, shade trees and a border of trees and shrubs. In 1909 C. M. Robinson called this playground “one of the most attractive I have seen in any city.”

Improvements were authorized in 1918.

In 1951 the Santa Barbara Kiwanis Club requested permission to construct a youth center building in Vera Cruz Park. The Park Commission recommended approval and a lease was signed. Another area of the park was later used by the Work Training Program. In 1965 City Council leased the remainder of the park to the School District for recreational and physical education purposes in connection with Lincoln school. The lease was not renewed when expired in 1970. In the meantime the Los Ninos Headstart Nursery School began using the youth building.

WILLOWGLEN PARK

Size

2.68 acres

Location

600 Willowglen Road

Date

1962

From Whom

Holiday Northridge Company

Restrictions

Be developed by City as park within 2 years

History

This small park was obtained by the City as a condition of approval of the Holiday Northridge subdivision. The design for its improvements was shown as a prototype in the 1963 General Plan. The name had been suggested in 1962. The park's development took place in 1964 and it was dedicated the next year.

SOURCES AND REFERENCES

Isaac A. Bonilla

Dr. Pearl Chase

Anthony O. Days

Emile Latham

Patrick J. Maher

Allen Ross

Hobart O. Skofield

Mrs. George Thorne

Pasadena Tournament of Roses Association

Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation

City Clerk's Office

City Park Division

City Planning Division

City Property Manager's Office

City Recreation Division

Various issues of "Noticias," the Santa Barbara Historical Society Quarterly.

The Santa Barbara News-Press:

"Santa Barbara Yesterdays" columns by Walker A. Tompkins.

"In Old Santa Barbara" columns by Stella Haverland Rouse.

"Olden Days" columns by Stella Haverland Rouse.

"Santa Barbara Parks," report of park superintendent A.B. Doremus, October 1, 1908.

"The Report of Charles Mulford Robinson Regarding the Civic Affairs of Santa Barbara, California." The Civic League, 1909.

"Major Traffic Street Plan – Boulevard and Park System," Charles H. Cheney and Olmsted Brothers, 1924.

"Santa Barbara, Tierra Adorada" published by the Security First National Bank of Los Angeles, 1930.

"A Report on the Second Emergency Unemployment Relief Fund," 1931 – 1932.

A Case Study of an Outgrowth of Settlement Work: The Department of Recreation of the city of Santa Barbara, California 1929 – 1941," M. Ann Windolph master's thesis UCSB (news reports, minutes, personal interviews).

"Making the People Happier," the Western Women, March 1931.

“History of Santa Barbara County, Its People and its Resources” by Owen H. O’Neil; Harold McLean Meier, publisher, 1939.

“Santa Barbara, A Guide to the Channel City and Its Environs,” Southern California Writer’s Project, W.P.A., 1941.

“Santa Barbara Department of Parks,” early 1945.

“The Old Mission Water System” by Pearl Chase; “Notes and Quotes,” reprinted from “*Noticias*” January – March 1957.

“California Historical Landmarks,” State Department of Parks and Recreation, 1972 edition.

“Santa Barbara Past and Present,” Walker A. Tompkins; Tecolote Books, publisher, 1975.